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ABSTRACT

In order to fulfill the mission of the school library media program and to ensure that the program is an integral part of the instructional program of the total school, the school library media specialist functions in three specific roles: (1) information specialist; (2) teacher; and (3) collaborative instructional partner. These roles are mutually supportive and interrelated, encompassing five major competency areas which are described and defined in this position paper. These five competency areas are inclusive of: (1) Instructional Leadership; (2) Administration and Professionalism; (3) Access; (4) Information and Instructional Services; and (5) Materials and Technology. This paper provides a statement of the mission of the school library media center and an outline of the competencies involved in each of the five areas. (MAB)

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Illinois School Library Media Association
609 West Douglas
Fairfield, Illinois 62837

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A POSITION PAPER ON THE PRIMARY COMPETENCIES OF SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA SPECIALISTS IN ILLINOIS

The mission of the school library media program as articulated in INFORMATION POWER (American Association of School Librarians and Association of Educational Communications and Technology, Information Power: Guidelines for School Library Media Programs, Chicago: ALA, 1988) is to "ensure that students and staff are effective users of information." The school library media program's contribution to the educational process is to fully integrate resources with specific learner goals and objectives through cooperative partnerships of all those who are responsible for student learning. The school library media program provides students and staff with opportunities to: appreciate the value of information; learn how to locate, analyze, evaluate, interpret, synthesize and communicate information and ideas; develop an appreciation of good literature; and become lifelong readers and learners.

In order to fulfill the program mission and ensure that the program is an integral part of the instructional program of the total school, the school library media specialist functions in three specific roles: (1) information specialist; (2) teacher; and (3) collaborative partner in instruction. These roles are mutually supportive and interrelated encompassing five major areas: Instructional Leadership; Administration and Professionalism; Access; Information and Instructional Services; and Materials and Technology. Each of these major areas is composed of primary competencies which relate to the three roles of the school library media specialist. These competencies represent the desired skills and knowledge a professional school library media specialist should possess and demonstrate to direct a building level school library media program.

Certification and Standards Committee
Illinois School Library Media Association
June 1991

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COMPETENCIES

1. INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP defines the educational role library media specialists play through cooperative partnerships with staff and administrators in developing, supporting, and extending school curriculum and its objectives.

In this role, we:

- articulate the relationship between the library media program and the curriculum.

- apply the principles of effective curriculum development.

- serve as cooperative partners in designing curriculum.

- coordinate resources available through the school library media center with state and local learner goals and objectives.

- apply the principles of information access to state and local learner goals and objectives.

- provide formal and informal inservice for educational staff about instructional ideas, methods, materials, and technology.

2. ADMINISTRATION AND PROFESSIONALISM define the management role library media specialists play and the responsibilities that are a part of being a library media professional.

In this role, we:

- establish and effectively carry out aspects of management such as:
  - *definition and implementation of library goals and objectives
  - *selection and supervision of staff
  - *public relations
  - *policies and procedures
  - *budgeting and record keeping techniques
  - *evaluation techniques

- maintain professional standards, guidelines, and ethical responsibilities related to the library media program.

- participate in continuing education and professional development activities and programs.

3. ACCESS defines the role library media specialists play in developing organized collections of materials and in providing physical availability, freedom of inquiry, and the privacy and rights of those who use the library media center.

In this role, we:

- provide access to resources developed through systematic collection development policies and procedures including: selection, acquisition, cataloging and classification, circulation, and evaluation.

- provide access to resources available through library systems, on-line information networks, and other external information sources.

- develop and implement policies and procedures regarding selection of materials, censorship and challenged materials.

- apply the principles of library media center design which provide physical and intellectual access to users.

4. INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES define the forms that library media programs take and the role that library media specialists play in providing the services.

In this role, we:

- provide instruction, reading guidance, learning enrichment, and reference and bibliographic services based on specific learner goals and objectives.

- apply effective teaching techniques when providing services.

- design and develop effective instructional materials.

- apply major theories and principles of learning and communication when providing services to users, including those with special needs.

5. MATERIALS AND TECHNOLOGY define the resources and equipment located within and outside of library media centers and the role that library media specialists play in providing them.

In this role, we:

- provide varied information formats, including print, non-print and technological forms, in order to meet the needs of the variety of cognitive styles in diverse student populations.

- facilitate the use of materials and technology in relation to learner objectives.

- use materials and technology to promote the stimulation of intellectual growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, and aesthetic values.